

THE
PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY,

INSTITUTED SEPTEMBER 1788,

FOR THE

Prevention of Crimes, and for a Reform among the Poor;

By training up to Virtue and Industry Vagrant Children, and such who are in
the Paths of Vice and Infamy;

To save them from Ruin, and prevent their becoming injurious to Society.

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T H E

P H I L A N T H R O P I C S O C I E T Y ,

I N S T I T U T E D S E P T E M B E R 1 7 8 8 .

TH E first year of the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY has now passed ; and during that interval the circumstances and prospects of this infant establishment have undergone a very material change.

The Plan for Prevention of Crimes, on it's first publication, was universally approved ; but doubts of it's being reducible to practice were suggested from every quarter, and greatly impeded it's advancement. Experience has now removed every ground of those apprehensions, and proved, that, great as are the objects of the plan, their attainment is easy and certain ; that the worst among the poor may be converted to the best ; indolence be changed for industry ; and crimes give place to domestic virtue and public good. Frequent accounts were published of the advances in the execution of the design ; and these served, by degrees, to gain over the doubtful, and establish a growing confidence in the Public at large. A rapid increase of subscriptions, joined to the general applause, gave testimony that every order of citizens were warmly interested in the event of the undertaking.

Within the first ^{fix} months, the funds, with the aid of two liberal donations of 100 guineas from the President, and 100 pounds from the Earl of Egremont, served only for the admission of nine wards. In the last half year, thirty-six were added, being four times the increase, in an equal space of time : the whole number is forty-five wards at the expiration of the first year.

As the plan of the institution has no parallel, so such a growth, in extent and in public esteem, is without example.

In the First Report, published in May last, an account was given of the continued accession of strength to that period; and it was added, that the same rapid progress was then going on. The intermediate time till the present has justified the expectations there held out, and similar ones may now be repeated with increased confidence.

If to establish a *New Charity*, in addition to the present numerous catalogue, were the purpose of this attempt, the object is now accomplished, and the institution might be left to the ordinary methods of direction and support: *but as an efficient instrument of policy in remedying a national evil*, its present period is to be considered, of consequence, only as it is a prelude and an earnest of greater things; and the efforts which have been employed to carry it on thus far, should be redoubled to draw a public good from the experience so happily gained.

Those forty-five children who are now in this institution would, almost to a moral certainty, have been numbered among the pests and annoyers of society, among the heirs to misery, or victims to the law. On the contrary, they have already entered upon the path of virtue, and are tasting the comforts of that industry by which they will soon become useful to the state. These owe their preservation from ruin, temporal, and perhaps eternal, mediately, to the bounty of the present List of Subscribers. The WHOLE NATION is indebted to the same bounty for such an addition to the general stock of virtue and wealth.

The institution supported by this society is named THE REFORM. In this seminary are, or are intended to be taught, all the most simple and useful arts of life. In particular, the moral and social virtues are cultivated by a regular system of exercises and encouragements. To give time for this plan to produce a lasting effect, the wards are apprenticed to the Society: they will, thus, continue under its care till the age of twenty-one; at which period it may be hoped that good habits will be confirmed.

In order that the benefits of this institution may be justly appreciated, they ought to be considered distinctly, in several points of view.

As a CHARITY, it reaches to the lowest depths of misery, to a class of people which appeared irrecoverably sunk and lost; and since the value of charity is proportional to the greatness of the misery it relieves, consequently this must stand in an estimation superior to all others.

As an INSTRUMENT OF POLICE, co-operating with the Law, it strikes an unerring and effectual blow at the root of vice; it cuts off the succession of evil from the

old to the young, and destroys it's existence by leaving it no inheritors. It is therefore to be preferred before an increase of judicial penalties, not only inasmuch as prevention is easier than remedy, but because punishments have proved ineffectual, while the salutary operation of these means is indubitable and certain.

As it promotes the interests of RELIGION, it stands on a level with other respectable and well-governed institutions; this department will be the province of the Clergy, to whose peculiar care it belongs.

As it promotes the SOCIAL VIRTUES, it may be presumed to have advantages to which no other institution can, as yet, lay claim, because it professes to inculcate them in a regular and systematic way, not attempted by any other; by attention to calling them into exercise, and by adding *the reward of merit to the punishment of faults*.

As a means of increasing the sum of NATIONAL WEALTH, it converts robbers into useful artisans, beggars into labourers, public depredators into protectors of public peace and private property. It proposes to populate waste lands, to cultivate barren wastes from the waste and the outcasts of mankind.

These desirable ends it accomplishes by the most simple means; by education, and training of youth; by preventing vicious habits, which when they are formed cannot be suppressed; and by directing to good purposes the current of human passion, which it would be in vain to oppose.

In a collective view, the amount of public good, and the increase of the general sum of happiness which this institution is formed to produce, render it's prosperity an object of the first concern to every individual, both as a citizen and as a man.

As it is therefore, demonstrably, and in so high a degree, the interest of the Public that this plan should be fully carried into effect; it becomes not only allowable, but even a duty incumbent on it's friends to endeavour to remove whatever obstacles may tend to obstruct the necessary supplies for its support; and they may with confidence urge each individual to a measure by which each and every one cannot fail to profit.

There is an objection advanced by great numbers, individually, to their own particular contributions, although they approve of the principles of the plan. It is the multiplicity and extent of charitable claims already made, not permitting them to listen to a new one.

It would be unpardonable to suffer the most cogent argument that can be brought home to the interests of individuals, *for* their contribution to remain an unanswered objection *against* it.

The number and extent of charities are the criterion of the degree of poverty and misery. It is certain that the wealthy and the industrious may carry too far their bounty to the poor and the indolent; and every one may in his own case apply this objection unanswerably to his contributing more of his property than he already does, to the support of idleness.

But when each is asked to contribute towards a fund for the purpose of forming an establishment for industry, and for annihilating that very poverty which now costs him so dear, the objection is to the last degree misapplied. For the question becomes, Will not you, who think too much is given for maintaining the poor in indolence, give a little to put them in a way of maintaining themselves by their industry? Will you not, by employing a small sum in a new and rational channel, create a saving to a considerable amount in those other demands upon you, the principle of which you do not approve?

Let it be asked, at whose cost are now maintained those poor who are subsisted without labour?—Surely at the public expence; and besides the established hospitals and work-houses, every beggar is a wandering example of charity, and every thief an addition to the public burthen.

Let it be asked, if the whole race of beggars and thieves might not be maintained by the Public, who now maintain them at, nearly as small an expence in regular well-conducted asylums, without labour, as they now cost in their vagrant state?

If therefore in such asylums they are trained to labour while young, and afterwards become industrious people, will not nearly the whole value of that labour be clear gain to the community.

If the community be a gainer, must not each individual have his share of the profit?

To bring the reasoning finally home—must not each individual save and gain in the diminution of poor-rates, and the various other claims of charity, and in the increased general produce of labour, and circulation of riches, more than his proportion of contribution towards effecting these objects?

It may be asked, therefore, if the number of charities and of poor, who subsist in indolence, can afford an objection to a plan formed expressly to lessen the number of both; and if the weight of the burthens they occasion is a reason against their being reduced? As soon might poverty be urged as a motive against œconomy and honest endeavours to gain.

So many important considerations combined, warrant the most solemn appeal to every good citizen and every good man;---an appeal to the judgment, to the feelings, to the conscience, whether each, for the attainment of so much good, will not afford, at least, a small proportion of his individual assistance.

Subscriptions for the Undertaking of this Society will be received by

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And by all the Gentlemen of the Committee, who meet on the first Friday in every month, at seven o'clock in the evening, at the St. Paul's Coffee-House, St. Paul's Church-yard; where, also, Subscriptions will be received.

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MANUFACTURE.

The institution already begins to show the fruits of industry. There are now carrying on a manufactory for carpenters work ; another for taylors ; a third for shoe-makers ; garters are wove ; and plain-work done. In each of these, more work is performed than the seminary will require for it's own consumption ; the surplus will therefore be employed for the benefit of the Fund ; and orders will accordingly be received and executed by

The Matron, the Shoe-maker, the Carpenter, and the Taylor, of THE PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY, at CAMBRIDGE-PLACE, *Hackney*.

As soon as a suitable spot of ground can be obtained, the *New Wards* will be employed in AGRICULTURE, in a reliance upon Public Support.

*** The Friends to the Society who wish to promote it among their connexions by distributing these Plans, will be supplied with them by sending to the Intendant's house.*

N. B. The First Report of this Society was published in June 1789, and is sold to Non-subscribers, Price One Shilling, by T. BECKET, *Pall-Mall* ; T. HOOKHAM, *New Bond-street* ; and J. JOHNSON, *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. — A Second Report is preparing.

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